

The Seahorse Dive Club Newsletter

Editor's Note

Welcome to the June edition of the White Horse Dive Club newsletter. The season has certainly kicked off with club members going on trips to Scapa Flow, Plymouth, Weymouth and of course the long weekend to Lyme Regis & West Bay.

Trip reports make the newsletter more interesting for those thinking of joining the club and show existing members what others have been up to. My aim is to get the newsletter out on the first of the month so I need stories (and photos, please) by the last week of the month.

The agency through which I do most of my training, GUE, promotes regular training sessions to cover kit malfunctions/self rescue scenarios. Although primarily a technical diving agency, this practice can be used during recreational diving too. Hopefully the new 'Final Thought' column will help you think through some of the failures which could happen and how you would deal with them. If you have any examples of where things that have gone wrong and someone could learn from it, drop me a line and I will create a scenario (changing the names/dates/details if you want).

Welcome to...

Pete Dunn (PADI DM), Emma Huxtable (PADI AOW), Stuart Lee & Alan Martin (PADI OW).

June 2006

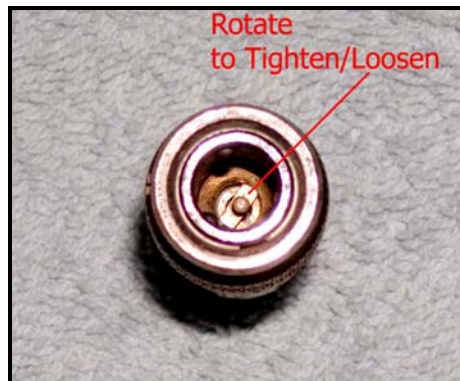
Committee Notes/ Important Club News

So that all members were aware of the new club rules, Lesley would email out the latest copy of club rules to all existing members and each new member would get a set when they joined.

The club also wanted to promote club diving and are in the process of producing a 'Top 20' of dive sites which the club visits.

Tip of the Month Leaking BCD/Drysuit Inflator Hose Valve

One of the skills that are taught during OW and Drysuit courses is the removal and replacement of the inflator hose from either the BCD or the drysuit in the event that the valve is stuck open. The hose can then be replaced. Sometimes this valve can attract some dirt which means the valve leaks gas when it is not connected.



The easiest way to stop the gas leaking is to use a small pair of

metal tweezers and rotate the bar, shown above, clockwise to screw the valve in. If this does not solve the issue, then take the hose to a LDS to be serviced.

Forthcoming Trips

UK – Next weekend is the trip down to Porthkerris to, hopefully, see some Basking Sharks. Dave Hall has all the details for this trip.

UK – Following on from a successful trip to Scapa Flow, Phil Green is thinking of organising a trip to Scapa or Normandy next year but needs to see what interest there is. Contact Phil for more information.

Overseas – Steve Cain and his bunch had a fairly successful trip to the Red Sea but Steve is thinking about chartering a boat next summer as a dedicated videography/photography dive boat. More details when they are available.

News from the Dive Media

A new site has been set up which allows people to quickly check the availability of boats. The idea is for skippers to register the spaces they have and then divers can quickly view which dive boats and dive locations are available on any given day. The address of the site is <http://boatspace.3ofathoms.com/boatspace/index.php> and to get the most from it requires registration. Benefits for divers include putting a certain wreck and day and the site notifying you when the criteria are met.

Trip Reports

5-8 May 2006 West Bay Dorset – Andrew Hancox

Fantastic weekend – could end there really but.I enjoyed 8 dives; 5 very good ones, plus one fantastic and two that left something to be desired but all helped me learn a bit more. I wish I had made notes as I am sure to have got some of these events in the wrong sequence or wrong dive.

Arriving at the Shrubbery camp site about 6:30pm on Thursday, I met up with Tony and Family and Mark H soon came in. Mark and I got our vans pitched and awnings up (awnings are so much easier for two than on your own) and we were soon followed by the arrival of by Steve and family and Mark in their vans. The new road works making this a challenge on it's own as the sea front entrance was inaccessible.

Friday morning; Tony, Mark and I piled into Mark's van to pick up the rib and out to West Bay meeting with Ross, Phil and father and son Steve making 8 of us in the Rib. West Bay proved an easy launch and our departure would have been quicker had I not left my mask in the Mark's van. The new kitting up bench on the rib proved very popular and made life much easier. Mark and Ross dived first (St Dundstan) but aborted after 20 mins due to poor vis and nets. So Mark took us to Sawtooth Ledges were one diver had not quite got the dry suit fully zipped up, a problem soon solved, but a somewhat wet diver. Though this was not the only diver to get wet, as later in the weekend at least one of us got back on Miss Patty

bringing the English Channel with them. Phil and I had a very enjoyable 43 minutes dive at 25 meters looking under various ledges and crannies. There were also some very long dog fish which, despite Phil's stealth fining, refused to let him get hold of. West bay offered adequate luncheon repast and cheap mid day tank fills. The afternoon was to Golden Cap Reef. Unfortunately a nearby dredger had churned up the bottom and we had very poor visibility and so at Phil's suggestion we aborted after 20 mins (this may have been a good thing as I had left one glove in Mark's van and at 10 degrees one hand was a little chilly). Mark illustrated his boat handling skill by getting the Rib back onto the trailer straight out of the sea. So much easier than the normal pulling and pushing with feet sinking in mud and muck. Ian and Phil joined me in my van for the night. A couple of pints in the awning, then down the pub and concluding with Ian providing significant entertainment in Mark's awning.

Ian and Phil again provided excellent company at breakfast and as it was a nice sunny day we dined al fresco. The Saturday saw us with John on Miss Pattie and the Wild Pig Rib in support. The first site was a great dive site (Silver Reef, 28m) but the algae in the May water killed the vis and I lost my buddy, Phil. I was not alone in this as someone else dived solo following some underwater confusion. After surfacing Phil spotted what he expected to be my SMB and descended as a way of finding me, but found no one on the other end. Fortunately there seemed to be very few incidents or problems over the long weekend

but that probably just shows my lack of observation. Someone lost a weight pouch but his trip to the dive centre in Exmouth yielded a free wet suit and between us we were able to find suitable weights. I am sure we will return to this site when that band of murk has reached the bottom.

The second dive on West Bay High Ground had much better visibility and we enjoyed a brilliant 59 mins at about 12m. Phil encouraged me to take the lead for my first time, which proved good experience for me with inflating and towing my DSMB. A superb afternoon dive with lots to look at and explore. Some of the fish seemed to be dancing round one another and there were several we could not identify including black and white spotted big roundish fish. Back in the awning a knowledgeable diver advised us later they were Raz. I knew we had seen some of those bright florescent blue Raz but apparently there are three fish groups, Raz, Cod and Fish and everything else is a crab (poor Lobsters). A glass of wine at the campsite then down the pub for some food and back to the campsite for further socialising making another great evening.

Ian and Phil seemed to sleep better that night; apparently my end of the Van was a little quieter due to a pair of nose clips. Sunday saw us again with John and again the Wild Pig in convoy. The first dive was the Baygatano which more than compensated for the previous afternoon as we had a superb 10-15 meter vis and the wreck itself exceed my previous visit by a huge margin, making it out of this world. Phil was buddying me and encouraged me to take the lead

again, occasionally reminding me to slow down and enjoy the dive, which I did. There was just so much to see. A brilliant dive so clear, so many varied fish and loads of Congers, Phil even tried climbing into one of the engine housings after one. We spent 50 mins down there and Phil managed to salvage a UK LED C4 torch. After lunch we moved onto a Pin Hay Settle for 47 mins at about 19 meters, making another good dive. An odd ledge, which seemed to be a series of steps, which almost doubled back on themselves. Less life than the previous afternoon but plenty to keep us entertained. And another useful DSMB exercise for me. A salvage attempt at a shot weight was aborted as a team of divers we deemed necessary and the £10 recovery reward did not quite support that.

The evening took us back to the dug up Cob for a bite to eat and a few very sociable beers. We visited "on the Bay" for our evening refreshment and Mark again offer excellent accommodation in his awning. I seem to recall doing a Jeremy Paxman impression and a debate with about what Japanese kamikaze pilots might have been thinking.

Heavy mist on Monday morning and thunder and rain threatening made us doubt we would get a dive in, as we did not fancy being lost in the mist, but Mark was positive. The two Marks, Tony and I set off from the campsite, picking up the boat on route and meeting Ross at West Bay. The boat was soon in the water and the five of us were off over pond calm waters and a sunny outlook, proving Mark's expectations correct. Looking back in land from the clear

calm sea and seeing the eerie mist covered hills was weird and reminded me of that Stephen King novel. This was followed by two 25 minute dives at about 25-26 meters over enjoyable ridges and significant scallop and crab catching on the first of the dive. Tony buddied me. As he sent the shot line back up with a lift bag a large lobster looked on with interest from between the rocks. The lift bag did not wish to go, and by the time we had it floating up, the lobster was in hiding. I am sure word got round the underwater land as a giant of a spider crab seemed to be making a grab for Tony during the afternoon. It was just a shame we had to end that second dive so soon. This highlighted the advantages of Nitrox as someone commented. Good visibility made this an excellent end to the weekends diving.

The weather had cleared in land and the day turned out Sunny and clear drying the awnings for those that had left them up. We had all vacated the campsite by 5:30.

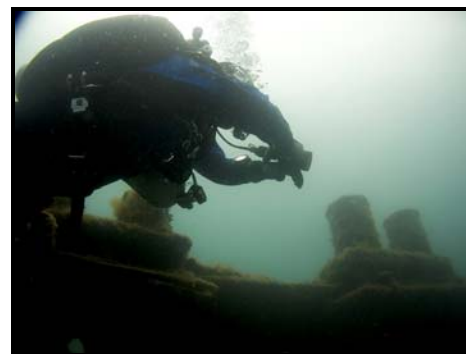
Aeolian Sky and Countess of Erne, 12 May 2006 – Gareth Lock

This was a trip for several of my GUE trained buddies on the Wey Chieftain III from Weymouth. An excellent dive boat designed with commercial and technical diving in mind, www.weymouthdiving.com. First dive was the Sky in 30m, we dropped down the shot and found the wreck with 8-10m visibility. As this was my first time on the wreck, we followed the skipper's advice and turned to the stern passing the superstructure and finding the embossed name on the stern. There was plenty of life on

the wreck hiding in the massive holds. After reaching the stern and having a look into some of the windows and doors we turned and starting heading forwards just as the tide was turning. An enjoyable dive marred by a motor yacht running over one of the DSMBs deployed – fortunately there was no-one underneath but instead a TV set!



The skipper of the yacht didn't know what the A-flag meant and was duly reminded by our skipper! After a surface interval we went inside the breakwater and dived the Countess. Last year I dived this in less than a metre visibility and thought if this is what UK diving was about you could keep it!! Today we could see the wreck from the shot buoy. We easily had 10-15m visibility which made swimming around the timbers of the 'holds' great fun.



A 3 min video of the dive can be seen here
www.imagesoflife.co.uk/weymouth/h/3_of_4divers_12_May_06.wmv

Final Thought...

Following last month's 'Final Thought', I raised the issue of continuation training for members of the club. There are many divers from all walks of life who gain their certification cards from whatever agency with flying colours, but how many of those divers practice the skills they learnt on their courses in the following months/years (apart from when it all goes horribly wrong). The committee decided that this column could be used to highlight 'emergencies' which people should think about and maybe practice at the pool. This month I am going to make some points how quickly you can lose your gas depending on system failures and what you can do to limit them.

The American diving magazine 'Advanced Diver' ran an article in November 2004 showing how quickly a 12L cylinder would be emptied under different scenarios whilst the diver was at 30m. The results are shown below to empty the cylinder from 210bar to zero.

HP hose failure 1320 seconds,
LP hose failure 81 seconds,
Burst disc failure 74 seconds, and a
Second stage failure 155 seconds.

The surprising thing is the long time taken to empty the cylinder from the HP hose feeding the SPG and how little time you have if a LP hose fails. The former is due to the very small diameter of the hole through the centre of the hose. If you take the SPG off the end of the hose you will see a tiny pin-prick of a hole which limits the volume of gas being released but allows the pressure to be measured.

When you are diving how far do you stray from your buddy? If you have a second stage fail you will be covered in a shower of bubbles and your buddy will probably hear something is wrong. You now have a limited time to make it to your buddy and get a working regulator in your mouth. You can breathe a free-flowing regulator but you are going to get some cold teeth! Try it the next time you are in the pool by purging the regulator while breathing from the mouthpiece – just let someone know that you are doing it so that you don't get a whole heap of 'helpful buddies' offering you their octopus!

Once you have a working regulator in your mouth you need to think about getting to the surface but try to remain calm! Two stressed divers breathing from one cylinder will use up the gas pretty quickly.

One of the drills covered during the OW course and the drysuit course is the removal and replacement of the feed hose. As shown on the first page this can lead to crud getting stuck in the valve causing a leak. A hose slowly leaking into a drysuit or a BCD, or more dramatic, a stuck-on valve can cause major issues if it is not dealt with. It is simply a case of disconnecting the hose from the nipple by pulling the collar back. There shouldn't be any further reason to inflate the BCD as you should be heading for the surface but if you do, just orally inflate using the mouthpiece on the hose. Again you shouldn't need to add air to the drysuit because as you ascend the air will expand and you will need to dump air.

When was the last time you practiced removing the feed hoses using 3-5mm gloves and manually inflating your BCD or breathing a free-flowing regulator? Have a go in the pool and dive safe.

Next month – cutting devices...

Social Notices

Nothing notified but if you want to arrange something, feel free and let the committee and me know so we can publicise it.

Sales and Wants

If you want to advertise anything, on the website, email Steve Cain stevecain_diving@tiscali.co.uk.

Links and Contacts

If you need to raise an issue with the club committee, contact Lesley lesley.s@cotswoldwireless.co.uk and she will put your issues or questions to the committee.

Sea Horse Dive Club:
<http://www.seahorsediveclub.co.uk>

Website Issues:
stevecain_diving@tiscali.co.uk.

Newsletter Issues:
gareth.lock@imagesoflife.co.uk

White Horse Divers:
<http://www.againstthewind.org.uk/whitehorse/index.htm>

Jason Costello Diving:
<http://www.jcscuba.co.uk>

Website of the Month:
<http://www.diveinstruct.org.uk/te rms7.html>